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Message of the Pres. 1888

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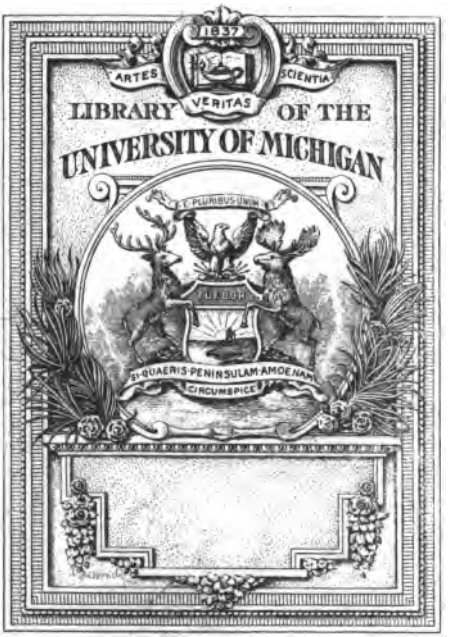
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MESSAGE

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

ON OPENING THE SESSION

OF THE

ARGENTINE CONGRESS

MAY, 1888

BUENOS AIRES

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SENATORS AND DEPUTIES.

It is a pleasure to me to again welcome you to these halls to open your second session under my administration, and, I feel certain that your intelligent labours will once again fulfill the aspirations of the Republic.

With that frankness inherent to our institutions and my own habit, I will lay the position of the country and its Government before you, trusting that you will see in it a ground for congratulation and new and noble hopes.

My policy has been peace, toleration and conciliation. The fullest liberty for expression of public opinion and exercise of rights has been the most eloquent phase of National life. The National Government is respected alike abroad and in the Interior, the States thereof giving it frequent proofs of support and confidence.

A comparison with times, unfortunately not very remote, shows palpably the immense progress made materially and in the aplication of the institutions under which we live. Until quite recently the political chapter in public documents like this was simply an index to all the horrors of civil war, attempts on the lives and properties of citizens, and a catalogue of outrages on an oppressed people by ignorant leaders, bred in the Desert, with an outward semblance of civilization, but none the less arbitrary and to be dreaded. Young men of the present generation can remember how the most trivial local disturbance gave rise to bloody struggles, exile and a complete abandonment of all labour, the scourge spreading from province to province, the only means of finally conquering the rebels being force and death.

Abroad, the very name of the nation was a synonym for Anarchy, prohibiting all chance of economic credit and life for the country, and destroying all stimulus for labour by an incessant state of uneasiness.

Far be it from me to reproach the governments that had to bear the burdens of those times; but implacable History forbids me ignoring facts which we all deplore, when comparing them with the bright present as the measure of our progress

Two important events have occurred since I assumed office which prove my words. They are mortifying no doubt, but the momentary consequences attached to them are

very different from the disastrous results they would have formerly had, and prove the great change that has taken place.

I refer to what occurred last June in Tucuman, and the recent political trial in Cordoba. The violent abnormal situation of Tucuman induced Government, at the call of the House of Deputies, to send a Commissioner, a competent magistrate, with family connections in Tucuman, but who held aloof from local questions, to investigate the matter. He failed to make peace, and even in his presence a revolt occurred and the local authorities were overthrown. By Act of Congress of July 1st, 1887, the National Executive interfered, and sent a Commissioner to restore the legal authorities; but in consequence of what had happened, and the antecedents of those expelled from power, he advised that it would be neither legal nor prudent to restore them, as the opinion of the whole province was against them, so he appealed to the people, the source of all power, to reconstitute indisputable legal government.

The National Government approved his course, and the present tranquil and flourishing condition of Tucuman, now in the full enjoyment of its costitutional liberties, proves that the course adopted by the Commissioner was sound and patriotic.

The affair in Cordoba, whether viewed impartially or from an extreme party point of view, is a healthy practical lesson in democratic life and an eloquent proof of the radical change in the mode of settling these chance conflicts inseparable from our form of government. Tax your memories, and calculate what the disastrous results of such a question would have been but a short time ago, under the influence of the times and the backward state of public opinion.

I must dwell for a moment on this, the most important event in the Republic during your recess, and which, for many reasons, I consider transcendent. I refer to Governor Olmos's trial and deposition by both Houses of the Legislature. I consider this event so significant from its being the first time the Governor of a Federal State has ever been deposed without that violence which earned for us abroad the reputation of the country of bloody revolutions and unstable governments. No matter what the motives of this deposition were, political passion or justice, the course taken is an honour to the Republic and its people. Military mutiny and popular revolt are no longer necessary to make their rulers responsible to the people. Political or personal change of Government is peaceably effected under the Constitution.

These events in Cordoba, at bottom, have no effect on National life, except so far as they forced the Federal Power into action and demonstrated the support I have given and will always give to local autonomy and the liberty of action allowed it by the Constitution, so long as it does not affect Federal Rights, or call for the fulfilment of duties imposed on the high authorities of the nation.

When the Chambers impeached Governor Olmos, he asked for the intervention of the National Executive, on the ground that his trial was illegally prepared; and, as it is one of the Constitutional duties of the National Government to see that the legally constituted authorities are not overturned either by revolt of the people or the public bodies, I was considering how I should act in the emergency when Governor Olmos's own conduct brought me to a halt. He had hardly asked for intervention when he submitted himself to be tried by the Chambers, thereby recognizing them as a Tribunal, and facing his accusers. I then, after consulting my legal advisers, refused to intervene for Governor Olmos, thereby showing that. I respected local institutions in their purity, and did not harbour the designs of malevolence attributed to me.

Nevertheless I wished to carry my spirit of impartiality to the utmost limit, and sent as Commissioner the President of the Supreme Court of the Province of Buenos Ayres, seeing in his high judicial position, his personal qualifications and his knowledge of local polities a guarantee of strict impartiality. His mission was simply one of enquiry and observation, to watch proceedings and report to the National Government if it should be found necessary to employ its authority to guarantee the republican form of government if it were destroyed, or to replace the authorities if they were overturned by sedition.

The National Commissioner fulfilled his duty honourably and in the course of the trial could find no trace whatever of any act amounting to parliamentary despotism or revolt of the Legislature against the Executive.

The Minister of the Interior will lay before you the Commisioners' report, with all particulars of the trial. Governor Olmos was legally deposed after a trial in strict conformity with the representative regime, and during which, according to the opinion of eminent jurisconsults all the Constitutional and legal prescriptions provided for such cases were strictly complied with.

I have confined myself to giving you a brief account of an event of relative importance in the home politics of the republic. I beg of you to form your opinions of it by reading the report and documents presented by the Com-

missioner, feeling assured that you will find therein proof that the National Government all through acted strictly within the limits of its duty and its right, and that the harmony of its relations with the Government of Cordoba was never for a moment interrupted.

There has been therefore a National Intervention following on a bloody conflict, and the Commissioner, without other arms then his nomination and your sovereign decision, settled the matter in a few days.

Intervention was also asked for but refused in a case in another province, which has been settled by the local powers, by merely applying the law—another example of sound doctrine and a lesson that will be profitable. The papers in reference to all these events will be laid before you.

Interior.

I have spoken to you about what our public documents traditionally call politics. The raw material for this chapter is becoming scarce, to the great good of our country, and soon we will have to suppress it altogether, or use it solely in reference to administrative acts that have no connection with elections, to present a schedule of our true politics in enumerating the prompt legal solution of questions between citizens, the spread of education, and the construction of public works to foment labour aud moralize the social mass in its peculiar ways.

I begin with a topic of singular interest.

When I sent you my first Message I confess to a certain hesitation of spirit lest a new programme, contrary to received ideas, should cause surprise and doubt as to the power to carry it out. Now, twelve months later, I can say to you with satisfaction that it has been carried out.

The public works in Government hands have been handed over, with evident benefit, to private enterprise, in compliance with your laws, my promises, and my hopes. The Central Northern and Andine railways have been sold; the extension of the former has been leased, and the City Improvement Works likewise on specially favorable terms. The payment or conversion of the loans affecting the railways sold and the City Improvement Works is being negotiated, as you will see in the Finance Report; and once these National properties are relieved of the lien on them the country will begin to receive their price, as far as the railways are concerned, thus sensibly improving the economic position of the same.

The contract for the City Improvement Works does not require such a condition; all the contractors require is an assurance from Government that they will not be disturbed in the management of the leased works by the holders of the loan raised for their execution.

I must call your attention to the inconvenience of mortgages or charges on the nation's properties, even when the loans are raised for specified works. Formerly it might have been necessary; but when the credit and responsibility of the Argentine Government are now firmly established by the regular meeting of all its obligations, all other guarantee but this credit and responsibility should be avoided, not only for the respect due to us, bnt because what is now occurring in reference to the contracts I have referred to shows how highly prejudicial is the mode of such transactions.

Your last session was prolific, as shown by your sanction of so many new laws. Since that session closed the Executive has only had five months to put those laws in force, nevertheless, I can assure you that most of them have been put in force, and preparations are in progress to carry out those requiring more time.

The law extending the area of the capital by annexing Flores and Belgrano has been carried out, and the difficulties inherent to such a complicated arrangement have been surmounted, thanks to the complete harmony of the relations between the National and Provincial Governments. All questions that arose were settled so easily that nobody could perceive that any had even arisen.

This difficult facility, if I may use such a paradoxical expression, shows the progress made in the mode of dealing with delicate public business.

All matters pending between the Nation and the Province in reference to the Capital Law are in course of settlement, and only require that indispensable requisite for all human transactions:—time. I can assure you that the harmony and elevation of views on the subject ensures the speedy settlement of all questions that may arise. The province of Buenos Aires, in less happy days in our history the scene of struggles that might have shaken national unity, is now the chief pillar on which it rests.

Railways

Of the 17 railways recently conceded, 13 enjoy the guarantee of the State. These guaranteed lines represent a total length of 7,961 kilometres (4,975 miles). The aggregate length of the other lines is 1,272 kilometres (795 miles).

The contracts for the following guaranteed lines have been signed: Tartagal Railway, Reconquista and Formosa Railway, Bahia Blanca and Villa Mercedes Railway, San Juan and Salta Railway, Chumbicha, Tinogasta and Andalgalá Railway, Goya and Monte Caseros Railway, Resistencia and Metán Railway, San Cristóbal and Tucuman Railway. Moreover a contract has been drawn up for a railway from this city to Chili, a distance of 1,250 kilometres; as also the contract for a line from Belgrano to Tigre, which does not enjoy a Government guarantee. The line from San Juan to Cabra Corral in Salta is being traced. That from Mendoza to San Rafael will be shortly concluded. The branch for the Central Northern extensions to Salta via Mojotoro has been completed, and in the course of this year the surveys of the line from Cobos to Salta via Lagunilla will be commenced. The line from Lerma to Cabra Corral has been surveyed and traced. Of the Chumbicha, Tinogasta and Andalgalá railway 70 kilometres have already been traced. The plans for the bridges on the extension works of the Central Northern railway are being prepared and will be shortly completed. The Board of Public Works has, moreover, examined the plans of the following lines: Transandine, Central Corrientes, Sunchales to Tucuman, Yerbas and Pergamino branches, Resistencia to Formosa, Santa Fé to Córdoba, and Resistencia to Metán.

The state of Railways in course of constructions is as follows:—

Central Northern extensions: the section from Tucuman to Chilcas was completed last year; 21 iron-bridges have been constructed in this section. With regard to the branches from Dean Funes to Chilecito and from Chumbicha to Catamarca, in charge of Messrs Gonzalez and Co., the earthworks have been begun, and the rails are being laid. In the extensions beyend Chilcas very little has been done. The company have had to contend with many unforeseen difficulties, for which the State makes due allowance, such as the outbreak of cholera in Salta, an epidemic that proved more fruitful in alarms than in disasters. Nevertheless, the Government is not pleased with the delay, as the stipulated terms are rapidly drawing to a close. The Government will exert itself, as much as possible, to infuse some activity into the prosecution of the works, in order to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of two important Provinces. The line from Buenos Aires to Mercedes, 108 kilometres in length, has been completed and opened to public traffic. Ten kilometres of rails have been laid on the Transandine section from Mendoza to

Valparaiso, and the navvies are at kil. 35 at the month of the Rio Mendoza.

The company expect to reach kilometre 100, that is Uspallata Pass, by the end of the year. For the construction of the railway from Monte Caseros to Corrientes and Posadas, the company are already importing the necessary materials, buying lands for the line, and preparing to commence work as soon as possible.

On the line from Sunchales to Tucuman, the navvies are at work on an extent of 250 kilometres and 40 kilometres of rails have been laid.

Guarantees on railway capital

Before I proceed to speak in reference to the heading of this paragraph, I beg to call your attention to the figures, shewing the traffic movement of the railways in operation. You will thus have an opportunity to draw some important conclusions. The railways cover 6,306 kilometres, have carried 7.657,409 passengers and 3.705,876 tons. The gross receipts amount to $ 23.805,722. Working expenses were 13.177,772, the net earnings being thererore 10.627,950. It is not befitting in this document to enter into further details from which you would infer that the state of our railways is far from being satisfactory. A glance at the figures which I have given suffices to confirm this unfavorable inference, and on more careful and more scrupulous examination, you would come to the conclusion that there is not a single company that takes into account its real obligations to the public, or renders the services expected by the Government at the time of the concession.

The traffic of the railways could be doubled and trebled. In any case it could be considerably increased, and the tariff might be easily reduced so as to diminish the responsibility of the Exchequer.

But the very limited rolling stock of the lines, the disgraceful want even in some, which seem to have been brought forth with the defect, render it perfectly useless for the public to complain and the action of the Government is barren of practical results. We are utterly powerless to overcome the difficulties for the moment. Theoretically, the railway act arms the Government with power to surmount the difficulties alluded to. Practically it is not so. The law requires that the railways should have sufficient rolling stock for the traffic. But the prescription is so vague that it can be easily elluded. The companies resist, and in the meantime traffic increases in the most extraordinary

manner. In some cases there is a certain excuse, a reason for the deficiency, but there are others to which the Government must display the strictest severity. Those companies that enjoy a guarantee have certain duties to discharge which they overlook. They should strain every nerve to increasé their traffic and earnings, which after all is but an act of honesty. The neglect of these duties affords the Government sufficient ground for the withdrawal of the guarantee. I can not find an adequate expression to qualify the conduct of those companies which collect their guarantee and pay little or no attention to taaffic, which is allowed to languish and decrease. On the slightest pretext attention is called to the necessity of paying the guarantee punctually in order to maintain the credit of the country abroad, but I do not see how the credit of a country could suffer, when it is proved that the State is compelled to take coercive steps against companies that have converted Government protection into a criminal and iniquitous exaction. The Argentine Government is not afraid to enforce its rights. Its credit stands firm and immovable, for we have always met our obligations. I call your attention to necessity of modifying the law in reference to rolling stock. If we allow the present state of affairs to continue, millions of tons will remain in the railway-stations and deposits, and the Government will be compelled to pay exorbitant guarantees, which freights could amply cover.

The difficulties in settling the guarantees, the necessity of rendering possible the negotiation ot the concessions recently granted, suggested to the Executive the idea of regulating the settlement of guarantees, in accordance with the spirit of the law. The arrangements decreed have removed all difficulties and have been much applauded. European capitalists merely await your sanction to negotiate the concessions. Government has paid considerable sums for guarantees. The railway returns are relatively insignificant, a fact which. I consider sufficient reason not to grant many guarantees, although the interest demanded has fallen from 7 and 6 per cent to 5 per cent. The fact of our having granted several concessions without guarantee shews that the country has entered a new era.

To remedy the abuses and evils which I have alluded to, the Executive recently issued a decree. A special committee is to study the state of the railways and to propose the necessary measures.

Hydraulic Works.

The following have been completed: The mole of Concepcion del Uruguay, now open to traffic. There are also a bridge and a Custom House. Total cost $410,000.

The iron-mole in San Nicolas—has been been received. Tenders have been called for, to join it to the bank, but no replies have been yet received. The works and plans in course of examination are: waterworks of Catamarca: drainage of Corrientes swamp: repairs of Martin Garcia mole.

The studies for the improvement of the Port of San Nicolas, which is seriously threatened by the formation of a sandbank, have been completed. The works will entail so much difficulty and cost, that the Engineers Department urge the removal of the port to the south side.

In accordance with a law sanctioned by you, the plans are being drawn up for water works in San Carlos, Salta. The cost is estimated at $230,000. The plans for the construction of a mole in Goya have been prepared. Cost estimated at 14,000. The repairs of the port of Santa Fe have been undertaken by the Government of that province.

The following works are in course of construction;—

Rosario Port—The works are enveloped in difficulties, many of an unforeseen character. The works are to be put up to bido and new plans drawn up. The deviation of the currents of the River Paraná has considerably modified the conditions of construction, and the value of land. And, furthermore, the Government is seriously preoccupied by the complaints and protests of property-holders. A full account will be laid before you shortly.

Quilino (Cordoba) Dock—The works are progressing slowly, owing to some mistakes, which are now being corrected. The Government has taken the proper steps to inspect the works.

Corrientes Mole—This work has fallen into the hands of the Department, on the recision of the contract. You will be asked to approve the measures of the Executive in this respect.

Rioja Water-works—The works are progressing satisfactorily. They will entail a cost of $95,000.

DREDGING OF RIO GUALEGUAYCHU—A channel 4100 metres in length, 5 in width and 2 in depth is to be built. The works are advancing steadily, despite the inconvenience of unforeseen accidents. The state of the works is very satisfactory.

CANALIZATION OF RIACHUELO DE BARRACAS—This work of great importance is being actively carried on under most advantageous conditions aud the superintendence of the able Committee of the works. In the course of last year excavations amounted to over one million cubic metres, at a cost of 47 cents per cubic metre. The cost of the work up to Decemper 31 of last year, since the beginning, was 6 millions and a half. The port gives from 6 to 8 per cent. on capital, despite its incomplete state. The sand extracted is sold by the Committee.

The returns up to the present have been $60,000. The sanitary state of he Riachuelo is rapidly improving. The waters of the stream are now clear and are no longer dangerous to public health. You will find the interesting reports of the Committee in the Home Office Report. They will give you au idea of the importance of the work realized and the advantages accruing therefrom.

BUENOS AYRES HARBOR WORKS—The woiks are advancing favourably and with regularity, and it is probable the first section will be completed within the stipulated term. The greater part of the basin has already benn excavated to the proper depth. Over 530,000 cubic metres, that is two-thirds of the whole, have been excavated. The embankments of the South basin are already finished. This basin will be 1095 metres long by 100 in width. About 250 metres of wharf have been constructed, and preparations are being made for construction in other ports. All the necessary materials are being steadily accumulated. The outside pier has been commenced, and piles have been driven in an extent of 1150 metres. 550 metres remain for the completion of the work. The earthworks of Dock No. 1, which is already the second section, are very advanced. The company have 1500 men at work, besides a good stock of machinery, such as steam excavators, locomotives (17) etc. By the suppression of the 'Communication Channel,' the south basin has been enlarged. This step, which was approved by the Executive, increases the advantages of the port and consults both private and public interests.

Roads and Bridges.

The culvert at the Puente Alsina in this city is being completed; cost 4482 dollars.

Bridge across Ferrari Arroyo (Buenos Ayres)—Is now open to traffic. Cost $4,675.

Rio Carcaraña Bridge (Santa Fe)—Plans already prepared. Estimatel cost $40,000.

Arroyo Virgen Bridge (Entre Rios)—In course of construction. Cost. estimated at $15,000.

Rio Gualeguay Bridge (Entre Rios)—Built by the Government. Cost $144,000. Open to traffic.

Riachuelo Bridge (Corrientes)—Works well advanced. Estimated cost $65,000.

Rio Batel Bridge (Corrientes)—Already contracted for. Estimated cost $57,000.

Santa Lucia Bridge (Corrientes)—Already begun.

Rio Corrientes Bridge (Corrientes)—The plans are being drawn up.

Arroyo Garrupe Bridge (Misiones) — Estimated cost $107,400. The plans have been already prepared.

Rio Mendoza Bridge (Mendoza)—Already contracted for. Estimated cost $178,400. Owing to the swollen state of the River, the works have not yet been begun.

Rio San Juan Bridge (San Juan)—Estimated cost $154,800. Already contracted for.

Rio Graneros Bridge (Central Northern Railway)—This bridge was carried away during the inundations. Estimated cost of re-construction $142,000. The works have already reached an advanced stage.

Rio Gastana Bridge (Central Northern Railway)—In course of construction.

Rio Arenales Bridge (Salta)—The plans have been drawn up. Estimated cost $48,300.

Rio Grande Bridge (Jujuy)—Tenders have been called. Estimated cost $175,000.

Flores Road via the Tablada (city)—About 6,000 dollars have been expended in repairing the road.

Road to Belgrano (city)—This road is being rapidly built, all difficulties having been surmounted: 6000 dollars have been expended.

Road to Puente Alsina (city)—The embankment approaches completion. Trees have been planted and other improvemts made. 10.000 dollars have been expended.

Coya high-road—This road, which establishes communication between Goya and the port and colonies of Lomas, is 15 kilometres in length. The road comprises

earthworks, a mole on the Parana and 6 bridges. Estimated cost $175;000.

Road from Avelleneda to Reconquista Harbor — 15 kilometres in length with bridges, culverts and mole in Reconquista. The road has already been completed at a cost of $61,762.

Road from Sebilla, Chumbicha station, to Barrial—55 kilometres in length: almost completed. The cost of the romaining works is estimated at $20,000.

Wilth regard to repairing roads, I beg to inform you that attention has been paid to the demands of the provinces of Mendoza, Rioja, Catamarca, Tucuman, Salta and Jujuv. A full account of the work accomplished will be shortly laid before you.

Patents and Trade Marks.

In the course of last year, 68 patents of invention were granted; also 13 precautional, and 3 renewed. 250 trade-marks were registered. The returns were 27,000, dollars. The map of the city is being prepared.

Home Office Buldings.

The Government House is already in part occupied; all the old building has disappeared aud the new edifice is well advanced. The Police Department is almost finished and will be occupied about the middle of the year. The Orphanage, which is now too small for present requierements, has been amply enlarged, as also the women's mad Asylum.

A large Pavilion has been erected in the Parque 3 de Febrero for the electric light machinery contracted for this Park. New buildings are being erècted for Post and Telegraph offices in Mendoza, Santa Fé and Rosario.

The law for the construction of a new Congress Hall is already being carried into force. A decree has been issued calling for tenders, and in a very short time you will hold sessions in a Hall worthy of your lofty aspirations.

A committee has been named for the purpose of carrying out the law for the erection of a monument in commemoration of our Independence. As you are aware already the statuès of Generals Paz and Lavalle have bean unveiled. Availing myself of the leave of absence accorded by you I unveiled the statue of General Paz in Cordoba and visited the provinces of Entre Rios, Santa

Fe and Cordoba, opening to public service the mole and viaduct in Concepcion del Uruguay,

The warm receptions I met with during my rapid excursion once again proved the high respect which the people have for their constitution, and the manifestations I received in Cordoba and other places have left indelible marks on my memóry

Municipality.

The project for the revision of our Municipal laws awaits your sanction. The antecedents regarding the present state of the Concejo Deliberante are already known to you, and no modifications can be made until you first sanction the reform law. The improvements in our capital continue to be carried out, and the Mayor's report will give full particulars of all the works that have been completed. Before this report is placed in your hands I wish to call your attention to a fact relating to the embellishment of the City. I refer to the Avenida de Mayo.

Y. H. arranged that this should be opened by expropriating the houses standing on same. The law was passed whereby the resale of the houses expropriated would supply the necessary money to carry out the work. A decision by the Supreme Court has, made this impossible, and it will be difficult to arrive at anything definite until this void is filled up, which the decision of the Court has created. Notwithstanding this the Lord Mayor still continues with the project and has some hopes of procuring the means to carry out to-day a necessity of great urgency.

City Police.

An important event has radically changed this departmen. I allude to the annexation of Flores and Belgráno to the federal territory. This step brought about the necessity of opening 6 new police-stations, and modifying the radius of many others. The service was considerably changed. Yet the change was effected with order and without many difficulties. The department discharges its duties very satisfactorily, despite the burthen of its extensive tasks. All the springs required for the maintenance of public order work smoothly and regularly, if we except a few contingencies which naturally arise now and then from the extraordinary increase of population by a current of not always the most select immigration. Add to that the want

of adequate legislative measures in this respect, the insubordinate tendency of the masses, and the limited number of men, and you will form an idea of the immense amount of work which this department is compelled to accomplish.

In accordance with the laws sanctioned by you, adequate buildings are to be erected for the police-stations. The Jefatura and its immediate dependencies will shortly remove to the building prepared for them.

The fire-brigade discharges its duties satisfactorily, and improvements are to be made in order to render the service more complete.

The immense traffic of our streets, which awakens the admiration of all foreigners visiting the city, renders it necessary for our police to be continually active. Nevertheless, everything within the municipal radius is scrupulously attended to. At the present moment particular attention is being devoted to the study of measures to properly complete the police service of the city. These measures will be submitted to your approval.

The police department has experienced a serious loss in the death of Col. Cuenca, who was Chief of Police since the beginnining of my administration. He distinguished himself by his talents and ability. Although we found great difficulty in choosing a successor, the Executive is pleased to think that the Department is safe in the able hands of Colonel Capdevila, the present Chief of Police.

The Beneficent Society.

It is with pleasure that I have to allude to this charitable association, which displays great zeal and activity in the management of the institutes with which we have entrusted it. Here again we have a proof of the growth of the country. Every branch of government is small when compared to the wonderful development of the Republic. It is well-known that misery and misfortune, which are inherent to large social groups, increase in direct proportion to the growth of charity and the improvement in the means of its distribution. The increase, therefore, in the number of applicants for official charity may be ascribed to the excellence of the management of this distinguished association. I need not, however, resort to a paradoxical truth to strengthen my statement. Take up your city-census and judge for yourselves. The Beneficent Society deserves your warm support.

Posts and Telegraphs.

You are already aware of the former state of this department. The improvements repeatedly made have completely changed it. The internal management has been reorganized on a more simple basis, and particular attention has been devoted to a better system of control. The services of posts and telegraphs have been amalgamated. Postage has been reduced; free postage abolished; and a check put on official telegraphic despatches. In a word, the Post-Office has been raised to a proper level. Over 4,565 kilometres of telegraph have been built and repaired, and we have contracted for 3,335. Communication will in this way be vastly improved. A contract will be shortly signed for the construction of a subterranean cable between this city and Rosario.

Notwithstanding the reduction made in postage the returns shew an increase of 24.72 per cent over the previous year's, and in telegraphs an increase of 20.50 per cent. Numerous branches have been removed, and the personnel is to be strengthened in order to keep pace with the rapid development of this Department. The laws relating to Posts and Telegraphs are deficient: a bill for improvements and reforms will be shortly laid before you.

Public Health.

The Board of Public Health has well attended to this department. An important convention has been celebrated with Brazil and Uruguay, in which are set forth all precautions to remove dangers to the public health of the signatory nations. I call your attention to this point, as also to the conclusions arrived at by the Medical Conference recently held in this city.

In the course of the year, a mild epidemic of cholera broke out in Salta, causing at first much alarm. As the plague had acquired terrible dimensions in Chili, the north and west of the Republic were seriously threatened. The measures adopted by the Board of Health soon quelled alarm and restored tranquillity. The experience we have had of two outbreaks of cholera clearly shews that those scenes of terror, unworthy of a civilized people, will never occur here. My Government claims the honor of having done the country a service by the measures adopted on the appearance of cholera amongst us. I may remark, however, that in the matter of public health, much remains yet to be done, and by the National Go-

vernment, since the Provinces have declined to take any steps in this respect, whether for want of resources or for any other reason, I cannot determine. They watch with complacency the action of national authority.

Maritime Prefectures.

The service rendered by this department in relation to navigation is of the utmost importance. The traffic of our rivers increases daily and there is an unprecedented increase in the number of ships which navigate them and which arrive from abroad. With their present means the prefectures can attend to the service required from them and no deficiency in this respect has been perceptible. The transport of provisions and other elements to various of our distant territorial governments is undertaken by the Prefecture of this Capital and is well managed.

Obstacles in the Rivers.

One of the causes which make interior navigation difficult is the existence of obstacles in the channels of the rivers. To destroy them in part, the Executive Power submitted to tender the surveys and works necessary for the removal of those near the island of Martin García and in the river Uruguay. Some proposals were presented, but nothing can be decided respecting them until arrangements have been made with the Oriental Republic of Uruguay in reference to certain works which would have to be effected in Oriental waters.

Lands and Colonies.

The existing law of Lands and Colonies answered its purpose at the time when it was passed, but the transformations of all kinds which have since taken place in the Republic have rendered the application of this law inconvenient. I will not occupy your attention with minute details which you may consult with more advantage in special documents, but will limit myself at present to point out to you that this branch of the Administration has been the object of serious meditation on the part of the Executive Power, and in order to present to you an idea of the reforms which are necessary, I have named a commission of competent persons to propose the modifications which in their opinion ought to be introduced into the law, having

regard to the state of the country and the facts suggested by experience. In due course I will submit to you the result of those studies.

Government of National Territories.

I must call your attention to the state of the National Territories. Everything relating to them is provisional and rudimentary. It will not be long, however, before these vast zones of the Argentine soil will, in consequence of development of their population,demand the serious attention of the Government.

Special legislation will be required, and this ought to be inspired by the certainty that each of these governments is destined to be a new State. The almost absolute want of elements in the territories prevents their vigorous growth. It will therefore be necessary to provide an adequate administration to prepare them to enter into the current of Argentine life with their rights as provinces. Early in your session, I shall propose to you the nomination of the Governors for the territories the present Governors of which have completed their term of office.

National Property.

Denunciation from private individuals respecting national properties of which it was supposed the Government had no knowledge, other analogous facts, legal dispositions upon this point and the evident convenience that the Executive Power should have an inventory of the National property, as required by a good administration, induced me to name a commission of distinguished citizens to whom was given the charge of making a census of everything possessed by the Nation, with power to make use of the details and elements which will be furnished by all the public offices and by the private individuals who may have them. The benefit of this measure is obvious. The said Commission has commenced its work with zeal and will probably complete it during the present sessions of Congress, so that, when you retire to your provinces, you will be able to take with you a complete index to the property of the State and the estimate of its value.

Foreign Affairs.

Our relations with the Government of the Nations of Europe and America continue to be most friendy. My Government endeavours, so far as depends on itself, to draw them every day closer. The questions not yet settled

by common accord are maintained on the terms of cordiality in which they were initiated. I can assure you, thus, that there is no fear of any disturbance of the terms of peace on which we live with foreign countries, nor even of any difficulty occurring with any of them.

The rule of conduct in the Boundary Question with Chili being the faithful fulfilment of the treaty of 23rd July 1881, our representative in Santiago has instructions to terminate the negotiation of this affair by proceeding within the stipulations of that international compact,—the two signatory Governments and the friendship of two peoples bound together by mutual sacrifices and glories being interested in its strict execution. I hope that very soon I shall be able to announce to you the happy termination of the pending negotiation.

In pursuance of the Boundary Treaty of September 28th, 1885, entered into with the Imperial Government of Brazil, the Commissioners and the technical staff and assistants were appointed to represent the Argentine Government on the Mixed International Commission charged with the exploration of the rivers and disputed territories in Misiones.

After more than a year of constant and difficult explorations, the two Commissions have returned to their respective countries with the reports and plans of these works effected together, and I am glad to state that the only doubt which arose was in reference to the necessity for the identification of the San Antonio Guazu, sustained by the Argentine Commissioners and resisted by the Brazilians. The dispute being referred to the two Governments in conformity with the disposition in the treaty, it has been spontaneously settled by the Imperial Government by agreeing to the exploration of the said river, which will be shortly effected.

The friendly relations maintained by the two Commissions during their work, the obstacles which they had to overcome in order to realize difficult explorations and the intelligence with which they have proceeded in preparing the necessary elements for carrying this affair to a definite conclusion are evident proofs that the members of both Commissions were animated with the elevated and patriotic sentiments which inspired both Governments when the treaty was signed tn 1885. Both the Argentine Commission, of which Colonel Garmendia was the chief and which has earned the consideration of the country and the Government and the Brazilian Commission, presided over by Baron de Capanema, are engaged in preparing the office

work for delivering to the Governments the complete result of their explorations and studies.

As for the Boundary question with Bolivia, I have to tell you that it has not undergone any modification. Both Governments endeavour to maintain the existing status in quo, and any question which has arisen has been discussed in the must friendly manner each side reserving what it understands to be its rights.

A question of vital importance has been settled satisfactorily by the Argentine, Brazilian and Oriental Governments by the celebration of the International Sanitary Convention which was signed in Rio de Janeiro on the 25th of November 1887 by the plenipotentiaries of the three nations. The divergencies in the sanitary measures frequent in these countries often caused complications and difficulties to commerce and not a little inevitable danger to public health.

Animated by the desire of getting rid of these evils and making practical the most advanced principles of science in the matter of international sanitary measures, the arrangement so often sought has now been realized with the efficacious and decided assistance of the distinguished men of science of the respective nations who formed the Medical Congress which preceded the Convention and to which we were invited by the Imperial Government.

Some of the clauses of the Convention and of the Regulations have been put in force in consequence of the appearance of yellow fever in Rio de Janerio prior to the arrangement between the three Governments. They were measures within their administrative faculties and which in view of that danger could not be delayed, bearing in mind, besides, in reference to ourselves, that previously to the Convention we had established the international medical service on account of the appearance of cholera in Genoa and other places in Italy.

It is also satisfactory to me to announce to you that jointly with the Oriental Government we invited the South American Governments to a Congress, composed of two plenipotentiaries from each country, in order to agree upon uniform rules on international private rights to put an end to the uncertainty produced by the conflict of laws. It will be the first South American Congress which assembles in one of the Republics of the Plate, and I have consented with the greatest pleasure to its being installed in Montevideo and suggested for it the 25th of August, the anniversary of one of the patriotic feasts of that sister nation.

In the «Memoria» which the Minister for Foreign Affairs will present to you, you will be able to study and know *in*

extenso the diplomatic negotiation of which I have given a brief account, and others, if not of equal importance, of positive interest for our country, such as treaties of commerce, consular conventions, and treaties of extradition negotiated in consequence of the law of 1885.

The law relating to consuls passed in 1886 and put in force from the 1st January, 1887, has given the results anticipated. Numerous dispositions have been made for regulating it, especially as concerning the income produced by the consulates. The use of stamps has permitted us to have exact knowledge in this respect and has enabled the Government to prepare a plan for the organization of the consular corps, such as befits the importance of our country abroad.

We can now organize the consular service with its own resources, seeking among ourselves for men competent to fill the consulates, and who may go abroad with real knowledge of the country, the commercial interest, of which they represent. Many studious young men will thus have a new and vast field of action for being useful to their country, by becoming a part of the Argentine consular corps, after giving the proofs of morality and ability which will be required from them.

There is no precedent among us for the figure which inmigration attained during the year 1887, when 137,000 persons arrived in the Republic, and during the first quarter of this year 50,000 inmigrants were incorporated into the productive forces of the country!

We may expect to receive 200,000 inmigrants during this year. I announce this trascendent fact, filled with patriotic enthusiasm at this inappreciable benefit derived from the internal and external peace enjoyed by the country, and I assure you that it is the constant preoccupation of my Government to reach the highest figure to which we can aspire.

The cost of fifty thousand passages from Europe will be advanced to agriculturists and artizans to enable them to come to the country during this year. The Commissary of Immigration has gone to Europe to establish the requisite service, and I have no doubt of the result of the commission placed in his able hands. The immigrants are received fraternally by our fellow-citizens, and being spread all over the Republic, they easily find well-being and even fortune, without feeling deceived in the hopes which bring them to ours shores. Labour is abundant with the development of agriculture and industry, and I can assure you that not once has it been possible to attend duly, even in the periods of the greatest affluence of immigration, to the demands of private indivi-

duals and of the numerous immigration commitees appointed by the National Government. In spite of the current of immigration, there is a deficiency of labourers, and if a large part of this year's maize crop had no been lost through the drought there would not have been enough men to harvest it. Everything shews us, then, that too much cannot be done to assist the flow of immigration to our country, and how much we ought to hope that it may continue to increase. I have not the fears which some of our public men entertain respecting immigration. It is sufficient for me to see it delivered to labour and binding itself to the country by ties of family and property, because I do not know any historical record of parents attacking the country of their children. It must be remembered, also, that as our territory possesses all kinds of climate, there is no nation whose sons do not find the climate of their country in some part of the territory of the Republic. The law which you sanctioned the year before last for the construction of immigrants' hotels in diferent cities of the provinces has begun to be carried into execution. The hotel for the Capital is already completed and it was opened to public service at the beginning of this year. We can lodge conveniently more than 2000 immigants and, in consequence of its position, they are distributed with the greatest facility and rapidity.

The Offices of information, created recently abroad, work with regularity in the principal Capitals, and the effects of their propaganda are being felt in Europe. Provided with necessary elements, they are able to give whatever information is required respecting the Republic. Numerous newspapers and periodicals publish the details transmitted to them by the Offices and it may be said that there is not a single European publication which does not make known our progress to the public. A telegraphic service in Paris, in charge of the Inspector of the Offices of Information, transmits to them and to the Enropean Press all important news respecting our country. For the first time our products appear in the Exhibitions which are so frequently held in the Old World. Every Office has a collection of specimens and is under obligation to send it to these Exhibitions, in which we have obtained first prizes. The Offices of Information are visited by numerous persons who desire to come to this country to do business with it, and in many of the Offices there is not a sufficent staff to give the verbal and written information sought, so great is the increasing demand for it. In connection with these Offices, and to demonstrate the riches of the Argentine soil, a permanent Museum of Products has been created in this Capital, in which will be collected and classified scientifically all the raw material and those of the

first and second extraction which are found or prepared in the country, and the studies will be made of them which are necessary for proving their merits. The organization given to this institution meets all the exigencies of science and progress; the Museum will comprise the mineral, vegetable and animal products of all the provinces and national territories, the similar foreign products and the wrappers and labels used for them respectively. Having regard to be high importance of this Museum some ground belonging to the Nation has been made use of for constructing a special edifice where it can be permanently installed, and which it will be within reach of all who wish to study the riches of the Republic. The Executive Power has taken the necessary measures for making the Museum an establishment which by its practical services may promote the national interest by making known in the most eloquent manner how great may be the development of industry among us in making use of the riches of our territory. The administrative part of the Museum, which contains the basis of its completes and perpetual preservation, has been carefully formulated, and the plan of the work is being carried out all over the Republic.

The law which you sanctioned authorising the Executive Power to contract with Mr. Robert P. Houston for two lines of direct navigation from the North of Europe and from the United States of North America will begin shortly to give beneficial results, by developing and augmenting our relations with that part of Europe and our Continent. The contractor has already organized the company in London with sufficient capital for the construction of fourteen large steamers which, under our flag and navigated by our mariners, will augment our commerce and open new currents of immigration and will be at the service of the Argentine Government for any object of national interest.

Of all these matters, which are so closely related to the progress of the Nation, a detailed account will be given to you in the «Memoria» of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Finance

The principal feature of the situation of the country is the great national development of trade, industry, capital and credit. To the increased value of land and city property to the development of trade to the increase of the country's production, to the opening of new banks, must be added the increase of the revenue beyond allexpectation, the facility with which the Exchequer meets its obligations, and the very favorable state of our credit, both at home and abroad. This

vertiginous impulse with which a new country displays its strength, in the development of its trade, the multiplication of industries, and in the fruits of hard work, is the most palpable proof of its sure and prosperous advance, and a pledge that this vast progress will contribute to cement and strengthen peace and liberty in the Republic.

I give you a brief description of our commerce, our revenue, our expenditure, and our debt, in order to confirm our statements and to strengthen the faith and confidence of the people in the development of its resources.

In 1886, our import and export trade amounted to 194 million dollars, and the figures for the year of which I am now giving an account are 218 millions, there being therefore an increase for 1887 of 24 millions, of which 9½ millions are due to imports and 14½ millions to exports. The increase of exports is due to a more considerable production of cereals, hides, and frozen meat. The increase in agricultural produce coincides with the suppression the export duties and of the duties on the import of articles required for home manufactures.

The first quarter of the present year, when compared with the same period of 1887, shews also an increase of 4 million dollars in imports and exports.

Sea and river communication has kept pace with the increase of commerce. In 1887, the shipping movement shewed an increase over 1886 of 997,000 tons. The arrivals and departures shewed an increase of 3950 vessels. The great development of our foreign trade is due to the growing requirements of the country, whose population is rapidly augmenting and whose resources double every year. It is also due to our Customs legislation, to the suppression of export duties, and to other measures adopted with a view to strengthen national industry.

The total revenue in 1886 was $46.762,000. For 1887 it was estimated at $50.522,000, but it rose to $78.135,000. There has been consequently an increase of 13,372,000 on the revenue for 1886, and of 7,613,000 on the estimated revenue for 1887. The revenue of 1887 was applied in covering budget of $43,263,000 and in defraying the expenditure of «Special Laws», which amounted to 3.756,000, which were not provided for in the Budget. In my Address last year, I told you it was the first time the revenue covered the expenditure, both of the budget and the Special Laws, there being a superavit of 139,000. Well, to-day the superavit on March-31st ult. amounted to 3,308,000, to which must be added 2,909,000 which represents the total preceding surplus. This polis a total of 6,210,000, which are deposited in the Nationa Bank.

The part of the floating debt corresponding to 'expedientes' has been reduced to 5 million dollars. Treasury Bills on the 31st March, 1887, amounted to $5,262,000 and on the same date this year they were reduced to $1,763,900. The credit extended to the Goverment by European banking firms to facilitate the operations of the Treasury amounted to $5,867,000 but this credit is guaranteed by 26,135 shares of the Central Argentine Railway, belonging to the State, and to this number must be added 13,000 more of the new issue, to which the state is entitled. These shares suffice to pay the debt due to the banking firms and to leave an important balance in favor of the State. I do not think it right that the State should hold so many shares, as its mission is not to earn dividends, even though they are quoted at 140 per cent on the London Exchange. In order to hold credits in Europe, to facilitate the operations of the Treasury, it is quite sufficient for the State to hold half the shares subscribed. I shall ask you to authorize the sale of the shares, when convenient.

The state of the consolidated external and internal public debt was on the 31st March, 1887:

Internal.....	$ 53,908,000
External...	» 93,882,000

From that date to the 31st March 1888, important changes have been effected. The substitution of $21,458,000 (5 per cents) belonging to the Province of Buenos Ayres for 4½ per cent bonds at 90 per cent reduced this debt by $1,589,000. Our 9 per cent Treasury Bills were changed without difficulty to 5 per cents, by virtue of the law passed in June 1887, and in compliance with the same law an amount of $648,000, of the bonds known as the «Roads and Bridge» and «Debt to Foreigners», was amortized. The Treasury moreover purchased bonds of the Home debt to the amount of $240,000.

The ordinary and extraordinary amortizations of the year amounted to 6,846,000, and there is a sum of 828,000 deposited in the National Bank to the order of the Board of Public Credit, corresponding to unclaimed interest and amortization. Thus the total sum amortized during the year amounts to 6,674,000. The state of the internal and external debet on the 31st March, 1888, was therefore

Internal.....	$ 47,100.000
External.....	» 92,427,000

The external debt can be paid off in eight years. The 1868 loan terminates in 1889. The annual service on this loan is 1 686,000, and in 1892 the loan of 1871 will be paid off. The annual service on this loan amounts

to 2,646,000. Well, if to the annual service on the debt we add the amounts which must be paid in 7 years to the Treasury by the banks, which up to the present have come under the Free Banking Act, the whole external debt can be paid off in 8 years.

The debt can also be paid off by the following sums:

Superavit in Nat. Bank.....	$	6,217,000
Bonds of Home debt purchased to guarantee issue of bank notes.....	gold	1,000,000
Proceeds of sale of railway from San Luis to San Juan.....	gold	3,515,000
180.000 Nat. Bank Shares	»	43,000,000
Proceeds of sale of Public Works	»	44,000,000

If the Government therefore has an external debt of $92,427,000 the truth is it has sufficient money to pay it off, if necessary.

Argentine securities were never quoted so high as at present. The 5 per cents issued in 1887 at 85½ stánd to-day at 97 per cent, and the 6 per cents are at 102 and 104½. It is my belief that while the Government is endeavouring to bring about unification, the largest possible amounts should be applied towards the redemption of the external debt. To unify the debt is to economise; it is but an act of justice to the State which has ever honorably met its obligations on loans issued at varying rate, low price, and high interest. Unification is necessary in order to render the service uniform and our credit stronger.

The value of legal tender does not bear relation to the securities offered by the banks of issue, nor to the prosperous state of our trade and commerce. The amount of notes in circulation is backed by the charter of the banks, and the charter of the banks is supported by the resources of the debtors, resources which consist in stocks that are continually rising in value, or in real estate, the value of which is considerable.

I own that on the Exchange all the movement of capital and stocks is concentrated. I know that the Bolsa is, and must be, the theatre of active speculation, which is the necessary outcome of its institution. But I maintain that this unbridled speculation on the value of legal tender makes gold scarce, causes the depreciation of the bank note, turns into other channels huge sums that by right should be devoted to the legitimate interests of industry, alarms foreign markets, and diffuses an uncurbed and general ambition to make fortunes by usury and

speculation. To the alarming dimensions of the present speculation I call your attention. I think that one of the remedies for this great evil, which springs from the inconvertible character of the bank-note, is that Congress should declare legal all transactions effected on the Bolsa, and that brokers should be declared subject to the prescriptions of the Commercial Code. In the course of this session a bill to this effect will be submitted to your consideration.

The law of June 1887 has been carried out. The capital of the National Bank has been increased, the Government having paid the full value of the 100,000 shares.

The bank continues to be one of the principal factors in the development of the country, owing to the valuable services it lends to commerce.

The Free Banking Act is in force. The banks of issue have been incorporated, including the Bank of Entre Rios which, since 1885, has issued notes without the autorization but with the toleration of the State. This illegal state of affairs has ceased, and the bank has handed over to the Treasury one million gold dollars to guarantee its issue.

The present issue of the National Banks amounts to $88,500,000 and yet money is scarce throughout the country. In the provinces the situation is particularly strained. The cause of the tightness of money is due to the expansion of trade, to increased credit, to the home-consumption, to the considerable value of land, to the increase of population, and even to the depreciation of the bank-notes on circulation. I call your attention to this fact. However, I can advocate no further issue, unless in accordance with the conditions of the Free Banking Act, which is a system of gradual reimbursement, guaranteeing the note, and strengthens the financial situation, restores confidence in the future economic power of the country, renders the circulation uniform, and subjects all the banks to one law and to a responsibility proportionate to capital

The National Mortgage Bank has already exhausted its issue of 50 millions in Cedulas. The advantages of this institution are felt throughout the counry. It has given value to land, and has helped to increase the supply of gold in the market, by placing Cedulas abroad. You will be asked to allow the Bank to make a further issue of 50 milions within two years. It is probable that on examining the question you will divide the amount and

authorize the bank to issue gold Cedulas, when required by the market.

In this brief report, I have given you a picture of the country, with truth and without exaggerating, and interpreting the natural sentiment at this moment I can say, in confirmation of the benevolent appreciations repeatedly made abroad, that the Argentine Republic is one of those American nations which displays most strength, most power in moral and material advancement, and that its flourishing situation and its credit have assumed such proportions that they form an obstacle to the redemption at par of our bonds.

Justice.

Justice is administered with constant labour, intelligence and enlightenment and the magistrates who exercise it are more and more securing the public respect, their judgments being treated as the expression of truth and justice.

The progress of the country will soon render necessary an increase in the judicial staff and a reform of its organization, in order to expedite litigation.

There were 800 more causes before the Federal Judges in 1887 than in 1886, which augmented considerably the work of the Supreme Court. This high Tribunal will soon be suitably installed in the building formerly used for the Provincial Hypothecary Bank but now belonging to the Nation. The Courts of the two Federal Judges of fhe Capital already at work there will remain until the Palace of Justice has been constructed; the plans for it are almost ready.

The labour of the administration of Justice in the Capital is constantly becoming heavier in consequence of the increase of the population and the staff is inadequate.

I am engaged in finding a remedy for this inconvenience and I hope soon to present it to you.

The courts of justice created by the law have been installed in the recently annexed Municipalities of Flores and Belgrano. The annexation has naturally increased the causes before the Tribunals of the Capital, but correctional justice is administered with promptitude, thanks to the industry of the judges and to the creation of the new Court.

There can be doubt as to the beneficial result of the present organization of Justices of the Peace, 25 178 cases having been despatched by them last year. A special law is, however, desiderable for the sake of uniformity and

the acceleration of proceedings. The Minister of Justice is preparing a bill for this purpose.

The sanction of the Code of Commerce prepared by Dr. Segovia, and presented to you in 1887, would complete our legislation and place it on a level with that of the most advanced nations. This bill comprises the legislation on bankruptcy so justly demanded by commerce. I ask you, therefore, to give preferential attention to the bill and to those relative to the procedure in civil and criminal cases, which have been presented to you in previous yours. Their object is to simplify the procedure and make the administration of justice prompt and economical.

Immigration is flowing constantly in a larger stream, seeking wellbeing on our soil, in our beautiful climate, and under the shelter of our institutions, which guarantee liberty of worship and conscience. To make this guarantee practical, I presented to you last session a bill for amending the chapter of the Civil Code relating to marriage, which, when sanctioned, will enable the inhabitants of the Republic to form a family, protected by the law and without violating their creeds. This bill shews respect for all opinions on religious matters, being the true expression of liberty of conscience. Its provisions have been generally applauded; the necessity of its sanction is felt more and more every day, and you have had it under consideration since last year. I must therefore beg your preferent attention to it, so that no more delay may occur, in realizing such a notable progress in our legislation.

The hygienic condition of the national prisons has been considerably improved without entailing expense on the Treasury. Nevertheless; the situation of the Correctional Gaol and the inadequacy of its internal arrangements make it urgently necessary to construct a new building on a larger scale than is authorized by the existing law. The plans are being prepared and will be submitted to you in due course.

Worship.

The relations between the State and the ecclesiastical authorities are maintained without any infrigement on the rights of the Nationul patronage, the Catholic Worship receiving all the protection authorized by you in fulfilment of constitutional prescriptions.

The bishops-elect for the dioceses of Paraná and Salta were presented to the Holy See for their canonical institution.

The commissioner appointed for the presentation of

the said Bishops was charged to arrange for the division of the archdiocese and the dioceses of Paraná and Salta, The Commissioner communicates having found the Pope well disposed in the matter, but as yet no definite result has been obtained.

I am glad to tell you that the missions established in the Republic are constantly extending their action, and, with laudable zeal, are carrying civilization to the most distant points and are thus justifying the protection granted to them.

Public Education.

The progress of public education, in all its grades, is in harmony with the general development of the Republic. The Government devotes constant attention to this transcendent branch of the Administration, understanding that a country which advances with extraordinary celerity and which assimilates annually to its population thousands of men of all races and all latitudes, requires to extend its elements of culture by raising, wherever it is wished to form a community, educational institutes for giving the young the clear consciousness of their duty in the road of life.

Penetrated with these ideas my Government has undertaken the task of giving a complete organization to Public Education, establishing proper relations among its various grades, and giving it a healthy impulse, from the primary school, the basis of all education, to the height of superior studies. The common Schools of the Capital and of the Territories have their uniform plan of studies and programmes, as also have those for Aplication, the Normal Schools and the National Colleges. I can tell you with legitimate complacency that this new organization has been accepted with applause by the men capable of appreciating t, on account of the prudent limitation fixed in the number of matters required by the plans of studies, by its coordination and the scientific judgment which has been shewn in its preparation, our own experience and that of the most advanced nation having been taken into account.

Care has been taken, also, to form schools truly Argentine, adapted to the necessities and nature of our country, by impressing a national character on the education which is given in the establishment paid for by the Treasury, and devoting special attention to the branches destined to influence the character of the young and to propagate the most ample knowledge of the national language, history and geography, and of the rights and duties recognized

and imposed by the Constitution». The University studies obey the regulations dictated by the Faculties, and the Universities have arranged their statutes in accordanee with the existing law. But, in the opinion of the Executive Power, this law requires some reforms, upon which the Minister of the Department is engaged. When this work is terminated, with the necessary modifications of the law of Common Education, all the grades of public education will be organized.

The Progress of the educational establishments last year was in all respects encouraging. The Universities improve and supplement their teaching; new professorships have been created in Faculties; secundary and normal education has been developed in a satisfactory manner; the essential provision of scientific material, the careful selection of the educational staff, and an attentive and incessant inspection have secured a notable improvement in the National Colleges and Normal Schools. The latter gain ground every day in public confidence, to such a point that the buildings which they occupy have no longer the capacity for containing the pupils who join the classes. This is most palpable in the schools of application. I think that we have now sufficient Normal Schools. Every Province has one for men and another for women, Buenos Aires and Córdoba being, on account of the larger population, the best endowed in this respect, the former having five schools and the latter three. In order to improve some of the buildings mentioned or to provide new ones, important works have been undertaken in various places, so that no pupil may ask in vain for admission to a Normal School. Last year, several new schools were created, in La Plata, Dolores, San Nicolás, Rio IV, Tucuman, Santiago del Estero and Salta, increasing the total number to thirty-four, of which fourteen are for women, thirteen for men and seven for both sexes. The creation of the third part of this number is due to my Government.

Last year, 71 masters graduated in the schools and 188 in the first quarter of this year. The day is not, then, distant, when the Normal Schools will supply as many masters as are required for primary education.

The number of National Colleges is fixed and is, in my opinion sufficient for the object of their creation. The discipline of these institutes is consolidated; all the disturbing causes which formerly impeded their progress have desappeared, the conduct of professors and pupils is no longer affected by politics, the National Colleges are only what they ought to be: educational institutes, completely subordinated to their regulations and natural authorities.

As regards primary education, which in the Capital and National Territories is directed by the National Council of Education, I am pleased to tell you that this industrious and honorable body has persevered in a plan of prudent economy which permits it to continue with success the beneficient and prolific work of insuring the future of education and facilitating the efforts of our successors, by bequeatheing to them, among other reforms, the schoolhouse which gives stability to and perpetuates the most beautiful institution of modern times.

To the school buildings which already adorn the Capital we shall soon be able to add four which are being completed and three which have been commenced on suitable sites and in excellent conditions. The example of the Capital in this respect is followed in the Provinces, where school building has been generalized so much that there are not more than two which do not share in this progress. Last year, four schoolhouses were opened in the province of San Luis and several in that of Buenos Aires which already possesses hundreds of these buildings. Rioja opened a large and valuable building: a Normal School for Men, having previously opened one for Women. Santiago del Estero is completing five in its Capital, has begun two in the country, and will soon have fourteen finished. Cordoba is building schools on a large scale. Salta has erected three buildings, one of them of real importance. Catamarca, also, has raised a new building, and the other Provinces, as well as the Governments of the National Territories, are pursuing similar objects, by acquiring land, collecting materials, drawing plans and preparing to follow the general movement.

I will close this chapter by mentioning some figures. Last year 116 schools were in operation in the Capital, of which 24 are graduated, 56 elementary, 20 are for infants and 16 for adults. Of the said total 41 are for boys, 48 for girls and 27 for both sexes. The 116 schools possessed 746 teachers, of whom 224 were men and 522 women; 426 were certificated; 500 were Argentines and 156 foreigners. The 116 schools were attended by 27,715 children; 14,445 boys and 13,270 girls. In the National territories there were 42 schools with 64 teachers and 2,998 pupils. The Schools of Application had 272 professors and an average attendance of 12,200 pupils. There were 2,080 Provincial primary schools with 3,579 teachers and 142,741 children; 75,068 boys and 67,463 girls.

In 1887 the province had the following schools and pupils :—

	Schools.	Pupils.
Buenos Ayres	616	44,888
Santa Fe	233	11,861
Entre Rios	111	7,673
Corrientes	190	8,498
Córdoba	147	10,200
Santiago	133	5,113
Tucuman	109	11,674
Salta	90	5,741
Jujuy	45	2,674
Catamarca	66	6,3ço
Rioja	77	4,783
San Juan	65	7,589
Mendoza	83	8,709
San Luis	145	7,166
Total	2080	142,471

There were 232 private primary schools in the capital; 58 for boys, 27 for girls, and 47 mixed. They were attended by 6295 boys and 4811 girls. In the rest of the Republic there were 625 private primary schools; 193 for boys, 167 for girls, and 165 mixed: which were attended by 16,960 boys and 14.000 girls.

Altogether there were 3028 primary schools, with 6241 masters and 227,450 pupils.

The present year has commenced under even more favourable auspices, and I am convinced that by making use of all the elements at the disposal of the Nation, we shall soon realize the noble ideal which we have in view, when there will not be in any part of the Republic a single child, of the age to be educated, who is deprived of primary education.

War and Marine.

The Nation enjoys the inestimable benefit of peace at home and abroad. Its conduct and even its progress inspire sympathy and respect, and thus the work of the Government relative to the Army and Navy is limited to the improving and perfecting the Administration, and the instruction and the discipline of the services. But this state of unalterable peace is not a motive for forgetting the fulfillment of civic duties whih the Constitution has imposed on the citizens, and therefore the Executive

Power has ordered the enrolment and organization of the National Guard and also that the army shall be filled up by conscription, in accordance with the law of 1872, because the enlistment of volunteers is rendered difficult by the high wages which are earned by personal labour.

The navy is undergoing notable improvements and has practised evolutions indispensable for its instruction, and it is my duty to tell you that the material both of the navy and army requires improvement and the necessary authority of Congress for effecting it.

I must again insist upon the urgent necessity for studying and sanctioning a Military code. The army is now governed by military ordinances which are incompatible with the constitution and with the innovations and advances which science and experience have introduced into military affairs.

I have given you an account of the political and economic situation of the Republic; upon this general sketch you can base your laws, condensing into them the necessities of the country and exigencies of opinion.

Permit me, however, to detain you for a few moments in order to manifest to you, with the loyalty which befits the first magistrate of the Republic, what is the character which I think you ought to impress upon your laws.

With the pride of an Argentine, I declare to you that in passing through some of the litoral provinces and a great mediterranean zone, during my recent excursion, I was able to convince myself that the country is being rapidly transformed, its productive forces being multiplied, our free institutions being strengthened, and every citizen acquiring the full knowledge of his rights and duties.

Politics have ceased to be the permanent battle field of the popular masses. To-day, all seek in honest work the reproduction of what they consume, without waiting, as in the days of electoral turbulence, for the elements necessary for life to be provided for them by the political committees, to which were formerly permanently affiliated those who never exercised any other profession than that of voting for some club or other.

Now, the situation is normalized all over the Republic. The increase of the comforts of life, through the greater facilities provided for labour, has made individualism root itself in each home, comprehending, doubtless, that the prosperity of each individual constitutes the prosperity of the country.

Colonization and railways not only transform the physical nature of our soil, they also prepare our people for republican life in its most beautiful manifestations,

teaching the citizen that he ought only to give to politics what is indispensable for the exercise of his civic duties, and that the residue of his forces should be devoted to the labour which increases wealth, production and national industry.

You have little need then, of occupying yourselves with political laws which the country does not require, nor public opinion for the moment demand.

The present situation proves this to you. There are not in any part of the country any organized oppositions, constituted parties or political circles which consider themselves excluded from public affairs, or who by their attitude render the work of administration difficult, making felt their non-participation in the combined action of the forces which concur in forming the Government. Far from this, the old hatreds are appeased, the adversaries of yesterday are brought together, and scarcely does opposition make itself felt in some isolated cases in the periodical Press; an opposition which, if it be worthy of being taken into account when inspired by a spirit of justice, loses much of its prestige when, as generally happens in our journalism, there is only seen behind the printed sheet a personality, more or less conspicuous, but which does not represent more than the opinions of the individual himself who exhibits himself in that newspaper.

This want of political parties, this same want of organized opposition in Parliament and out of it, might call the attention of thinkers if it had not a simple and obvious explanation. The Nation is always roused when the moment approaches for the periodical change of its chief mandataries. It is then that parties are organized and agitate; it is then that in all social spheres the commotion is felt with more or less intensity. To day we are yet far from that electoral epoch; to day all combinations would be premature. Until that moment arrives the Republic has to continue the evolution which it recently commenced and which will be the great factor in all the economic and political problems of the future.

Consecrate, Gentlemen Senators and Deputies, your talents and efforts to laws which promote the progress of the country, in the sense of moral and material aggrandizement, by the augmentation of its industries and of its education. The well being which accompanies labour will make your political laws unnecessary.

The colonies which subdivide the lands in Buenos Ayres, Santa Fe, Entre Rios, Cordoba and other provinces, and all the national territories call to labour the Argen-

tines who hitherto were the soldiers of the "montonera" and the agents of the electoral circles.

The railways, extending in all directions, create a demand for laborers which cannot be satisfied even by the prodigious immigration which daily arrives from abroad.

Private fortunes, augumented in proportions which astonish even their possessors, by the mere lapse of time and the increasing progress, seek an immediate investment which is offered by new industries and by the extension of those already existing.

All these facts, and especially Peace which has become a necessity in the Republic, prove to you that the traditional country of revolutions and intestine strife is being rapidly transformed and converted into a conservative nation, which seeks its grandeur and happiness in the individual wellbeing of its inhabitants, in order that the prosperity which springs from each hearth may dilate and form the prosperity of the Nation.

The Argentine people is beginning to be convinced that it does more for the country in the work which aggrandizes it than in the constant electoral agitation which removes men from their labour.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SANATE AND HOUSE OF DEPUTIES—

Invoking the aid of Divne Providence I declare the legislative term for 1888 to be hereby opened.

M. JUAREZ CELMAN.